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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5675
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
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STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA

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SUBJECT: WFP BURMA APPEALS FOR INCREASED DONOR SUPPORT

REF: 06 RANGOON 1615

¶1. SUMMARY: The World Food Program (WFP) seeks over \$45 million in additional support from current and new donors to support its new Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations in Burma. The program will benefit 1.6 million vulnerable Burmese and will cost \$ 51.7 million for the three-year project period. Donors have committed \$5.5 million of WFP's \$16.6 million budget for 2007. END SUMMARY.

¶2. On January 26, WFP Burma Country Director, Christopher Kaye, briefed diplomats in Rangoon on WFP's new Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO) program for the period 2007-2009. The program will benefit 1.6 million Burmese who face food insecurity and will cost \$51.7 million over three years. Its key objectives are to: improve food security for the most vulnerable by covering their food gap, improve maternal and child nutrition, improve food security for vulnerable families and communities through food for work activities, and improve children's education through increased attendance at primary schools.

¶3. Key interventions include relief rations for returned refugees and victims of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, Food for Education, Food for Work, Food for Training, supplemental feeding programs, and emergency response. The new PRRO program combines earlier WFP programs in Rakhine State, Magway Division, and Shan State into a unified package with a single monitoring and evaluation system. It will address serious malnutrition among Burmese children. Studies show that 25 percent of newborns in Burma are underweight and 33 percent of children under five years old are moderately to severely malnourished.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

¶4. WFP currently faces many challenges in its relief work in Burma, including government restrictions on the movement of local people and goods, changes in regional military leaders, volatile food commodity markets, and limited UN access to

needy areas. However, WFP believes its increased presence in operational areas provides greater protection to beneficiaries, provides greater space for conducting humanitarian work, and enhances opportunities for more coordinated, integrated rural development.

¶5. The 2007 PRRO budget is \$16.5 million, but donor commitments to date equal \$5.5 million, sufficient to cover WFP's activities for only the first four months. WFP has requested current and new donors' help to fill the shortfall of \$11 million dollars (reftel).

¶6. COMMENT: Post has verified that WFP programs make a significant impact on the lives of Burma,s most vulnerable people. WFP's assistance to Rohingya communities in northern Rakhine State has been vital to their survival and development. WFP also works among the poorest of the poor in Magway and Shan State. WFP has reasonably good working relations with its government counterparts and it works closely with local and international NGOs who implement WFP's program in the field. WFP monitors its food distribution closely to ensure that food assistance is delivered directly into the hands of the target population, and is not diverted into government control. WFP does not plan to make a separate appeal in Washington, DC. Post recommends USG support for the new PRRO program. END COMMENT.
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